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PAB/7088/DGMcN/RG

FROM: D G McNEILL, PAB  
DATE: 9 APRIL 1991

PUS/SSg  
10 APR 1991  
N.I.O. LONDON

Copy No [ ] of 10

cc Mr Ledlie [3]  
Mr Pilling [4]  
Mr Deverell [5]  
Mr Alston [6]  
Mr Thomas [7]  
Mr Petch [8]  
Mr Marsh [9]  
File [10]

PS/PUS (B&L) [1&2]

*PA*  
POLITICAL MOVEMENT AND THE PROVISIONALS *23099 A*

1. I called briefly with Peter Robinson MP today on a matter unconnected with the above subject. Sammy Wilson was in his room when I arrived.
2. When I was there the fact that Dr Paisley had challenged me about information which he had to the effect that I had engaged in talks with Sinn Fein/PIRA came up. The atmosphere in which the discussion took place was friendly and relaxed but had some of the elements associated with a sports club locker room; that is they were probing and searching even though we were all laughing and joking.
3. They said that Ian Paisley had not discussed this with them beforehand but had mentioned it afterwards. Peter Robinson said Ian Paisley had thought that the information he had was accurate. I repeated what I had said to Paisley - that I had not been talking to anyone in Sinn Fein or PIRA and then asked if Ian Paisley now accepted that. Robinson did not answer directly but countered by saying "but you have written a paper (perhaps he said papers) on the prospects of PIRA ceasing violence and turning political". I did not deny this but said that I wrote papers on many issues of political significance, including papers on the DUP which sometimes were written without direct consultation with the DUP but were

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analyses of their public positions, and that anything I wrote about PIRA/Sinn Fein was based on an analysis of their public statements and certainly not after dialogue with them.

4. I did not pursue how Peter Robinson came to know or guessed that I (or PAB) had written paper(s) and the conversation moved on without any signs of animosity or disbelief on their part.

- Mr General [3]
- PS/Minister of State [3]
- PS/Sir K Bloomfield [4]
- Mr Deversell [8]
- Mr Thomas [9]
- Mr McNeill [10]
- Mr Petch [11]

(SIGNED)

(Copies [5-11] without enclosures)

D G McNEILL  
Political Affairs Division  
SH Ext 2238

I attach a paper reviewing the current state of the Provisionals and political movement. It has been prepared by Mr Marsh, in agreement with [redacted] and Mr McNeill.

1. Its broad conclusion, which must be right, is that work towards a ceasefire has largely halted for the present and no immediate change is in prospect.

3. The paper reports the falling away of activity by intermediaries in recent weeks (including those sponsored by the two Archbishops) and for what it is worth Mr Sidney Bailey, the doyen of the Quaker movement told me that this was very much the message he and his colleagues were getting from their Northern Ireland contacts.

4. Quite apart from the security dimension of the political development talks process (on which I am in touch with the Chief Constable and the GOC) we shall need to keep a close watch on any political impact on Provisional Sinn Fein. As the Secretary of State knows, my own concern is that while any entry by Sinn Fein into the talks process would be unthinkable even if a ceasefire were announced tomorrow it will be desirable to avoid slamming the door too loudly in Sinn Fein's face, looking ahead. The basic message enunciated in the Secretary of State's "British Presence" speech is still there and there could be occasion as the talks process itself unfolds for some repetition, though the timing and expression of it would have to be very carefully judged.

J A CHILCOT

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